

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended). Isolated human soluble ~~guanylyl cyclase α 1 (hsGC α 1; SEQ ID NO: 2)/ β 1 (hsGC β 1; SEQ ID NO: 4) purified to apparent homogeneity~~ guanylyl cyclase α 1/ β 1, which is an enzymatically active heterodimer comprising hsGC α 1 (SEQ ID NO: 2) and hsGC β 1 (SEQ ID NO: 4).

Claim 2 (original). A method for the production of α 1 (hsGC α 1; SEQ ID NO:2) and β 1 (hsGC β 1; SEQ ID NO:4) subunits of human soluble guanylyl cyclase comprising the expression in prokaryotic or eukaryotic host cells of expression vectors containing the DNA sequence of hsGC α 1 and hsGC β 1 and obtaining the subunits.

Claim 3 (original). The method for producing the α 1 and β 1 subunits of human soluble guanylyl cyclase according to claim 2, wherein the step of obtaining the subunits comprises a lysis of the cells, the affinity chromatography of the cell lysate, and the subsequent elution of the subunits.

Claim 4 (original). The method for producing the α 1 and β 1 subunits of human soluble guanylyl cyclase according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the expression vector contains at least one additional DNA sequence coding for a domain for the specific affinity chromatography (affinity tag) with appended protease cleavage site.

Claim 5 (original). The method for producing α 1 and β 1 subunits of human soluble guanylyl cyclase according to claim 4, wherein the expression vector contains the DNA sequence for hsGC α 1 with affinity tag, the DNA sequence for hsGC β 1 with affinity tag, the DNA sequence for hsGC α 1 with affinity tag, and the DNA sequence for hsGC β 1, the DNA

sequence for hsGC β 1 with affinity tag and the DNA sequence for hsGC α 1, or the DNA sequence hsGC α 1 with affinity tag and the DNA sequence for hsGC β 1 with affinity tag.

Claim 6 (currently amended). The method for producing human soluble ~~guanylyl~~ cyclase α 1 (~~hsGC α 1, SEQ ID NO: 2~~)/ β 1 (~~hsGC β 1, SEQ ID NO: 4~~) guanylyl cyclase α 1/ β 1, which is an enzymatically active heterodimer comprising hsGC α 1 (SEQ ID NO: 2) and hsGC β 1 (SEQ ID NO: 4), the method comprising the separate expression in prokaryotic or eukaryotic host cells of an expression vector containing the DNA sequence for hsGC α 1 or hsGC β 1, extraction of the subunits, and reconstitution of subunits hsGC α 1 and hsGC β 1 to form the dimeric guanylyl cyclase α 1/ β 1 (hsGC α 1/ β 1).

Claim 7 (original). The method for producing human soluble guanylyl cyclase α 1/ β 1 according to claim 6, wherein the step for the purification of the subunits consists of a separate lysis of cells containing hsGC α 1 or hsGC β 1, the separate affinity chromatography of the cell lysates, and the subsequent elution of the subunits.

Claim 8 (currently amended). The method for producing human soluble ~~guanylyl~~ cyclase α 1 (~~hsGC α 1, SEQ ID NO: 2~~)/ β 1 (~~hsGC β 1, SEQ ID NO: 4~~) guanylyl cyclase α 1/ β 1, which is an enzymatically active heterodimer comprising hsGC α 1 (SEQ ID NO: 2) and hsGC β 1 (SEQ ID NO: 4), the method consisting of the coexpression of the DNA sequences of hsGC α 1 and hsGC β 1 in prokaryotic or eukaryotic host cells, a lysis of the cells containing hsGC α 1 and hsGC β 1, and affinity chromatography and subsequent elution of hsGC α 1/ β 1.

Claim 9 (withdrawn). Use of a nucleotide sequence encoding the hsGC α 1 (SEQ ID NO: 2) and/or hsGC β 1 (SEQ ID NO:4) subunits of human soluble guanylyl cyclase α 1/ β 1 for somatic gene therapy.

Claim 10 (withdrawn). Use according to claim 9, wherein vectors or a mixture of vectors contain the nucleotide sequence of human soluble guanylyl cyclase α 1 (hsGC α 1) and/or human soluble guanylyl cyclase β 1 (hsGC β 1).

Claim 11 (withdrawn). Use according to claim 9 or 10 for the prevention and therapy of atherosclerosis and its complications, of restenosis, ischemia (infarction), peripheral arterial occlusive diseases, and arterial hypertension as well as for the prevention of atherosclerosis in patients with risk factors, transient ischemic attacks, cerebral ischemia, stroke (Apoplex), coronary heart disease, status post coronary bypass grafting, carotid stenosis, heart insufficiency and liver dysfunction, and as a supplement to therapy with sGC activators, sGC-sensitizing substances, NO donors, or phosphodiesterase inhibitors.

Claim 12 (withdrawn). Use according to claims 9 to 11, wherein the somatic gene transfer is carried out with endothelial cells, vascular smooth muscle cells, neointimal cells, fibroblasts, or other vascular cells or blood particles (platelets, leukocytes, and others), or liver.

Claim 13 (withdrawn). Antibodies against human soluble guanylyl cyclase α 1 (hsGC α 1; SEQ ID NO: 2)/ β 1 (hsGC β 1; SEQ ID NO: 4) obtainable by immunization of a mammal with the peptide fragment Phe-Thr-Pro-Arg-Ser-Arg-Glu-Glu-Leu-Pro-Pro-Asn-Phe-Pro, or parts thereof, or immunogenic peptide fragments that overlap with this fragment, or obtainable by immunization of a mammal with the peptide fragment Lys-Gly-Lys-Lys-Glu-Pro-Met-Gln-Val-Trp-Phe-Leu-Ser-Arg-Lys-Asn-Thr-Gly-Thr-Glu-Glu-Thr or immunogenic

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fragment or immunogenic peptide fragments that overlap with this fragment and isolation of the antibodies.